

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AGR-05 AID-05 CEA-01 CIAE-00 COME-00

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FM USMISSION EC BRUSSELS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8257

INFO ALL EC CAPITALS 328

AMEMBASSY BERN

AMEMBASSY HELSINKI

AMEMBASSY MADRID

AMEMBASSY OSLO

AMEMBASSY PRAGUE

AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK

AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

AMEMBASSY VALLETTA

AMEMBASSY VIENNA

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ELAB, XT, EEC

SUBJECT: ETUC EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE APPROVES CGT TALKS AND
REVIEWS EAST-WEST CONFERENCE

REF: EC BRUSSELS 9936

1. SUMMARY: THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE EUROPEAN TRADE
UNION CONFEDERATION (ETCU) MET IN BRUSSELS ON FEBRUARY 6.
IT WAS DECIDED THAT ETCU PRESIDENT VETTER AND GENERAL
SECRETARY RASSCHAERT WILL MEET SOMETIME IN THE NEAR FUTURE
WITH OFFICIALS OF THE FRENCH CGT TO HAVE GENERAL TALKS AND
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TO DISCUSS "CERTAIN QUESTIONS" RELATED TO THE CGT'S

APPLICATION FOR ETUC MEMBERSHIP. THE COMMITTEE ALSO DETERMINED THAT THE ETCU WILL NOT HAVE A ROLE AT THE FEBRUARY 28 EAST-WEST CONFERENCE AT GENEVA. OTHERWISE, THE MEETING WAS UNEVENTFUL AND IN THE VIEW OF MISSION SOURCES AT THE ETUC SECRETARIAT, "NOT VERY PRODUCTIVE." END SUMMARY.

2. THE ETUC EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE HAS RATIFIED AN ETUC PRESIDUM RECOMMENDATION OF LAST DECEMBER CALLING FOR "TALKS" WITH THE FRENCH CGT. ETUC PRESIDENT VETTER AND GENERAL SECRETARY RASSCHAERT HAVE BEEN INSTRUCTED TO MEET WITH CGT LEADERS FOR GENERAL TALKS WHICH, ACCORDING TO AN ETUC SECRETARIAT SOURCE, WILL ALSO INCLUDE DISCUSSION OF QUESTIONS RELATED TO THE CGT'S APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP IN THE ETUC. THE MEETING WITH THE CGT MAY TAKE PLACE DURING THE FIRST WEEK OF MARCH AT GENEVA ALTHOUGH A DATE FOR THE MEETING HAS NOT BEEN SET. MISSION SOURCES AT THE ETUC SECRETARIAT EMPHASIZE THAT THE TALKS SHOULD NOT BE CONSTRUED AS "NEGOTIATIONS." THEY ALSO CLAIM THAT THE MAJORITY OF ETUC EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBERS REMAIN STRONGLY OPPOSED TO CGT ADMISSION.

3. AT THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING, ACCORDING TO OUR SOURCES, ITALIAN CISL LEADER BRUNO STORTI WAS ADAMANTLY OPPOSED TO THE ETUC-CGT TALKS. WHEN HIS EFFORTS TO BLOCK THE TALKS FAILED, STORTI THEN SUCCESSFULLY LED THE OPPOSITION TO A BRITISH TUC MOTION TO EXPAND THE VETTER-RASSCHAERT "TALKS" MISSION TO INCLUDE MURRAY OF THE TUC, DEBUNNE OF THE BELGIAN FGTB AND AT LEAST ONE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE NORDIC UNIONS. STORTI CONTENDED THAT ENLARGING THE MISSION WOULD INDICATE A WILLINGNESS ON THE PART OF THE ETUC TO NEGOTIATE WITH THE CGT. STORTI, WHO LED THE DRIVE TO BRING THE ITALIAN CGIL INTO THE ETUC LAST YEAR, REPEATEDLY REFERRED TO THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE CGIL AND CGT WHILE MAKING IT CLEAR THAT HE WAS STRONGLY OPPOSED TO CGT ADMISSION. HE EMPHASIZED THE POINT THAT THE CGIL MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION HAD THE UNANIMOUS ENDORSEMENT AND BACKING OF THE ETUC AFFILIATED UNIONS LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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IN ITALY (CISL AND UIL), WHICH IS NOT THE CASE OF THE CGT IN FRANCE.

4. THERE WAS GENERAL DISCUSSION ABOUT THE UPCOMING EAST-WEST MEETING AT THE ILO. ACCORDING TO OUR SOURCES, MURRAY AND JONES OF THE BRITISH TUC INSISTED THAT THE ETUC SHOULD NOT HAVE A ROLE AT THE EAST-WEST CONFERENCE BECAUSE IT IS TO BE A EUROPEAN REGIONAL

MEETING OF INDIVIDUAL NATIONAL TRADE UNION CENTERS IN EUROPE AND NOT WITHIN THE DOMAIN OF INTERNATIONAL OR PAN-EUROPEAN TRADE UNION ORGANIZATIONS. THE MURRAY-JONES POSITION WAS ADOPTED BY THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE DESPITE THE STRONG OBJECTIONS OF VETTER AND RASSCHAERT WHO HAD STRONGLY ADVOCATED A COORDINATOR ROLE FOR THE ETUC AT THE EAST-WEST CONFERENCE. VETTER SPOKE AT LENGTH ON THE NEED FOR KEEPING THE EAST-WEST CONFERENCE WITHIN THE ILO FRAMEWORK, BUT THIS EVOKED LITTLE COMMENT AND NO VOTE WAS REQUESTED OR TAKEN.

5. AFTER LENGTHY BUT INCONCLUSIVE DISCUSSION ON ENERGY, THE GENERAL ECONOMIC CRISIS AND MULTINATIONAL COMPANIES, THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE INSTRUCTED THE SECRETARIAT TO FURTHER DEVELOP ACTION PROPOSALS IN THESE AREAS FOR PRESENTATION AT THE NEXT ETUC EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE WHICH IS SCHEDULED FOR APRIL 25.

6. COMMENT: CLAIMS OF ETUC SECRETARIAT OFFICIALS TO THE CONTRARY, THERE CONTINUES TO BE CONSIDERABLE SENTIMENT ON THE ETUC EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE IN FAVOR OF CGT ADMISSION. WE SHARE THE VIEW OF NEARLY ALL OBSERVERS OF THE INTERNATIONAL TRADE UNION SCENE HERE IN BRUSSELS WHICH FORESEES EVENTUAL ADMISSION OF THE CGT WHEN AND IF THE CGT AGREES TO MODIFY ITS RELATIONSHIP WITH THE COMMUNIST INTERNATIONAL, THE WFTU. HOWEVER, WITH STORTI NOW JOINING FORCES WITH THE GERMAN DGB AND FRENCH FO AGAINST THE CGT, THE ADMISSION PROCESS PROMISES TO BE LONGER AND MORE DIFFICULT THAN IT WAS FOR THE CGIL.

7. THE DISPOSITION OF THE GERMAN DGB WILL BE A KEY LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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FACTOR IN THE PROCESS. CGT OPPONENTS ON THE ETUC EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE ARE RELYING HEAVILY ON THE GERMANS IN THEIR EFFORTS TO CLOSE THE DOOR ON THE CGT. VETTER'S RECENT MEETING WITH SOVIET LEADER SHELEPIN, WHICH HAS BEEN MUCH DISCUSSED IN BRUSSELS, AND THE FACT THAT THE GERMANS CAVED IN SO EASILY ON THE QUESTION OF CGIL MEMBERSHIP LAST YEAR ARE UNDOUBTEDLY DISQUIETING FOR THE DGB'S ALLIES IN THE ETUC WHO ARE BEGINNING TO DOUBT THE DGB'S TENACITY IN EAST-WEST MATTERS. ADDITIONALLY, VETTER IS GENERALLY VIEWED AS PRETTY MUCH OF A LIGHTWEIGHT IN TERMS OF LEADERSHIP AND THE PROSPECT OF HIS DEALING WITH THCGT'S WILY GEORGES SEGUY HAS NOT BEEN RECEIVED WITH MUCH ENTUSIASM AT THE ETUC SECRETARIAT.

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8. ONE AGAIN THE BRITISH HAVE PULLED THE RUG OUT FROM UNDER ETUC AND ICFTU SECRETARIAT OFFICIALS WHO HAVE BEEN ADVOCATING A COORDINATOR ROLE FOR THE TWO ORGANIZATIONS IN DEVELOPING AT LEAST A SEMBLANCE OF WEST EUROPEAN STRATEGY FOR THE UPCOMING EAST-WEST CONFERENCE. IN FACT, WE WERE RELIABLY INFORMED THAT A MEETING FOR THAT PURPOSE BETWEEN REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ICFTU, ETUC AND WCL HAD ALREADY BEEN SCHEDULED FOR FEBRUARY 27, THE EVE OF THE EAST-WEST CONFERENCE. PRIOR TO THE 1974 EAST-WEST MEETING, THE BRITISH SUCCESSFULLY DENIED A ROLE TO THE ICFTU IN THE EAST-WEST TALKS BY USING THE VERY SAME ARGUMENT. IT IS NOW
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EXPECTED THAT THE ICFTU AND WCL WILL PROCEED WITH THE MEETING ON THE 27TH BUT THE BRITISH HAVE ENSURED THAT THE ROLE OF THE INTERNATIONALS IN DELIBERATIONS WILL BE MINIMAL IF INDEED THEY HAVE A ROLE.

9. ONE DISGUESTED ICFTU OFFICIAL RECENTLY TOLD US THAT THE PRIMARY PURPOSE OF THE BRITISH HAVING MEMBERSHIP IN THE INTERNATIONALS (ICFTU AND ETUC) IS TO MAKE SURE THAT THE TWO DO NOT FUNCTION AS INTERNATIONALS. THE BRITISH TUC'S CONTINUED REFUSAL TO PARTICIPATE IN INSTITUTIONS OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY AND ITS INSISTENCE THAT THE INTERNATIONALS NOT HAVE A ROLE IN EAST-WEST MATTERS TEND TO BEAR OUT THIS CONTENTION.
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